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No. 2.—DURHAM

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# Portfolio OF English Cathedrals



With Historical and  
Architectural Notes  
By ARNOLD FAIRBAIRNS

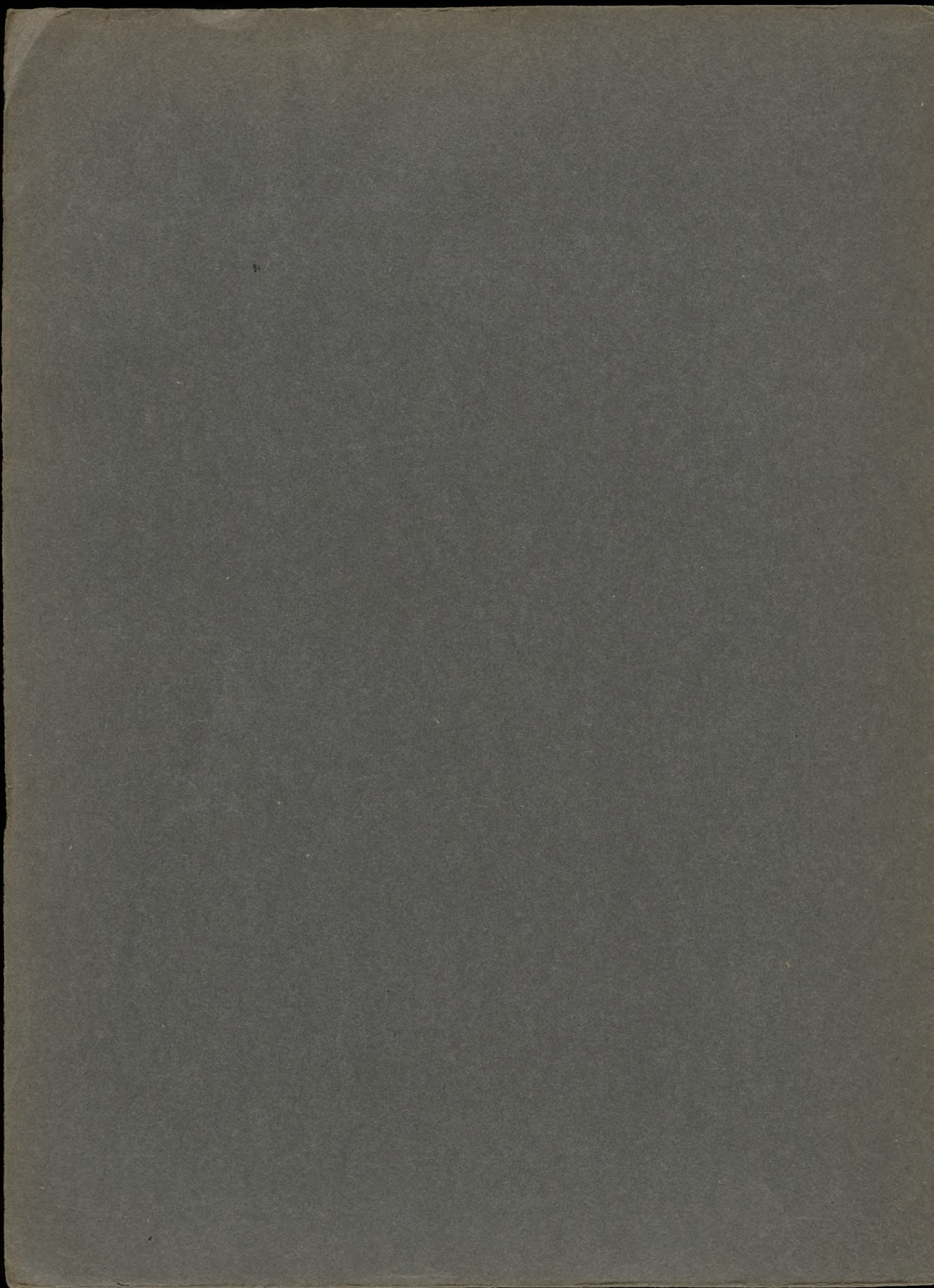


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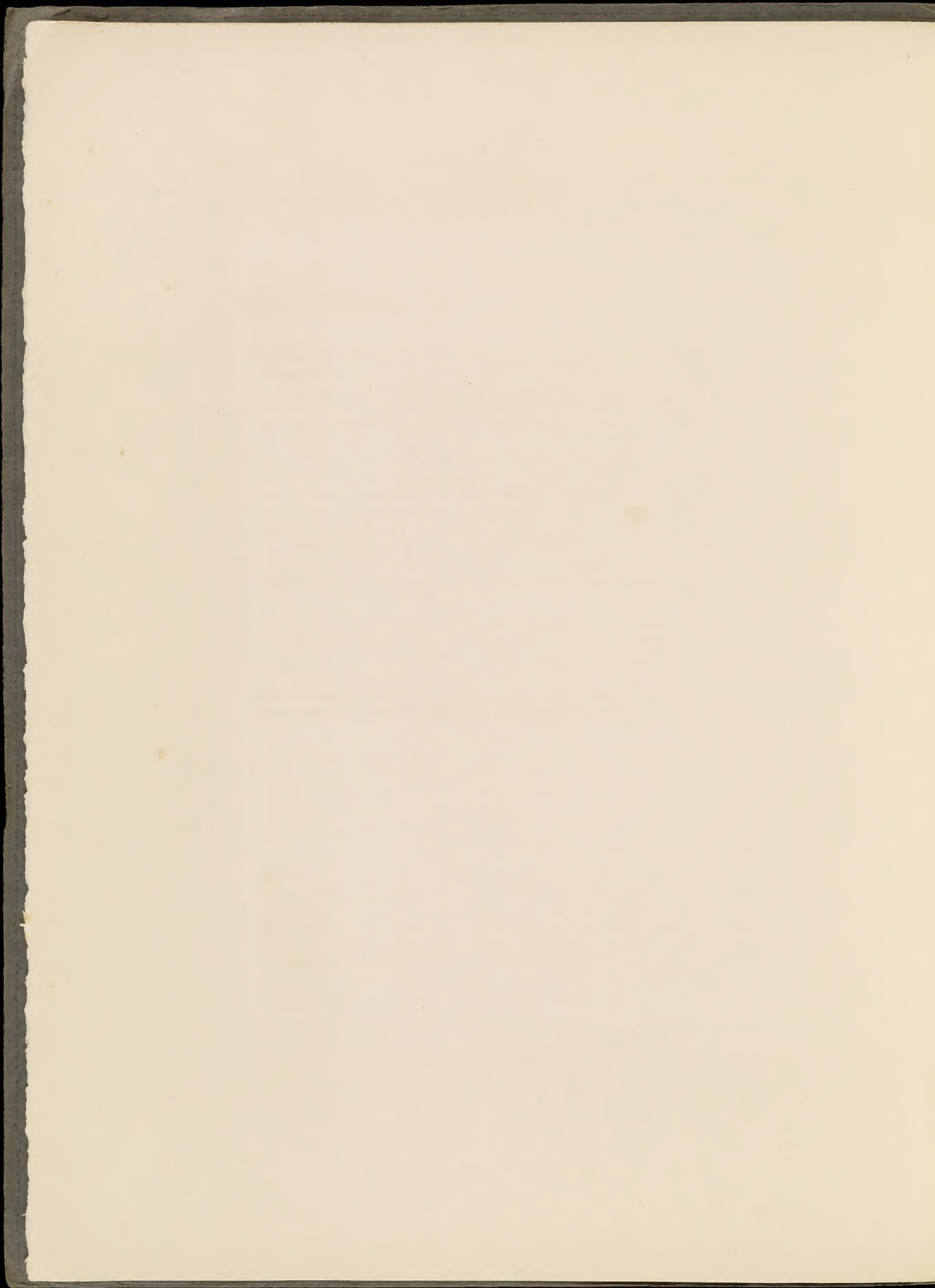




## DURHAM CATHEDRAL

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## INTRODUCTION



**N** 995 a party of wandering monks, carrying the body of St. Cuthbert, settled on the wooded hill overlooking the Wear, which now bears the name of Durham. It was just three hundred years since Cuthbert had been consecrated bishop of the northern diocese of Lindisfarne, which had been established by Edwin of Northumbria under the missionary Aidan in 635. Christianity had been introduced by Paulinus as early as 625, but a pagan revolution under Penda had swept away the first converts and their teachers. Edwin, on becoming king, sought missionaries from the great Irish church, and Aidan came to Holy Island. Danish invasion drove the monks from their exposed position on the coast in 875, and after a hundred and twenty years, during the greater part of which the bishop's seat was at Chester-le-Street, Durham was finally chosen and a church built. Of this first building—the White Church—no trace remains. The ground plan of the cathedral as it stands to-day is the work of Bishops Carileph and Flambard, with extensions at the west and east ends in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

When William the First conquered the north he made the bishopric of Durham into a county palatine like that of Chester. His object was to secure his kingdom on the north against the Scots, as he had on the west against the Welsh. The bishop was absolute ruler in his own province, for the king's writ did not run therein. This palatine power though greatly curtailed in 1536, after the Pilgrimage of Grace, survived till 1836, when on the death of Bishop Van Mildert the old privileges became vested in the Crown.

Anthony Bek is the most striking example of the power of those palatine bishops. He followed Edward the First to Scotland with a train of over fifteen hundred armed men, and before his death was Patriarch of Jerusalem and King of the Isle of Man.

The cathedral was served by Benedictine monks who had been introduced in place of secular priests by William of St. Carileph in 1083. The remains of the monastic buildings are exceptionally fine and very extensive.

One of the most valued privileges of the church was the right of sanctuary for thirty-seven days which it offered to all malefactors. The curious bronze knocker which remains on the north door was used to gain admittance to the church, a porter being ready at all times to receive fugitives. The object of the hollow eyes is uncertain, but it may have been to allow a light shining within to guide anybody coming by night. It was the presence of the shrine of St. Cuthbert which gave this special privilege to the church.



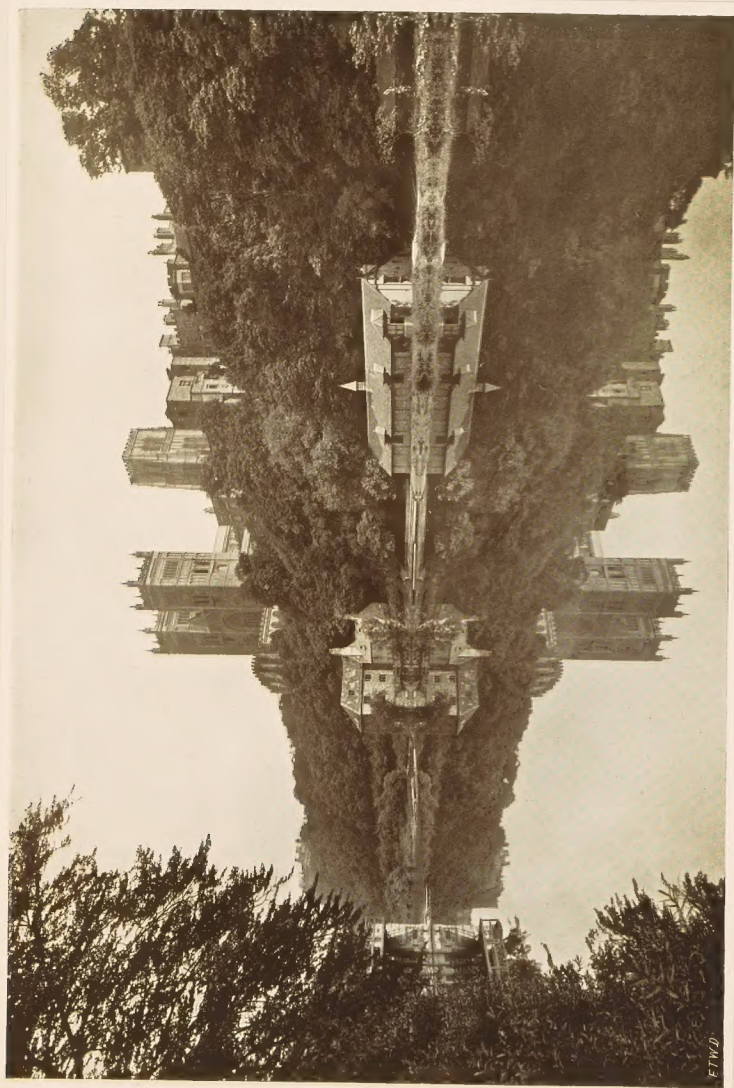
## THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE RIVER

WHEN Divine inspiration led the wandering monks to the wooded meadows of Durham they found a spot worthy in every way of the holy treasure they brought with them.

With the light of the setting sun shining on the winding river and wooded hillside, crowned with its three noble towers, the picture is one of inspiring beauty such as not even Salisbury or Wells can equal. As the expression of the mediæval builders' highest aspirations Durham is unsurpassed, surrounded as it is by every beauty which nature can supply. The varied outlines of the Castle and the College complete the grouping and add considerably to the picture.



DURHAM CATHEDRAL



THE CATHEDRAL, FROM THE RIVER

## THE NAVE

THE exterior of the cathedral suffered severely in the restorations of the eighteenth century; the interior has been more fortunate. For grandeur, solidity and impressiveness the nave is unrivalled. The proportions are perfect, and the unusual feature of a nearly contemporary vault secures a delightful harmony throughout.

Ranulph Flambard built the nave between 1099 and 1128, the vault probably being added before 1133. All the main doorways are worthy of study as good examples of late Norman sculpture.

The immense font canopy was given by Bishop Cosen in 1663. In the floor near by is to be seen the boundary cross beyond which no women were allowed to pass.



DURHAM CATHEDRAL



THE NAVE

## THE CHAPEL OF THE NINE ALTARS

BISHOP POORE had started a great building scheme at Salisbury, and when he was translated to Durham he planned the beautiful eastern transept to receive the body of St. Cuthbert. It was nearly fifty years building (1232—1280) and the development of the style during the period can be clearly traced. St. Cuthbert's shrine rested on the platform behind the High Altar. His coffin was opened in 1826, and the interesting relics found therein, as well as part of the coffin, are to be seen in the library.

The carving throughout the chapel is exceptionally fine, and the "Jacob" window in the north wall is the most beautiful in the cathedral.

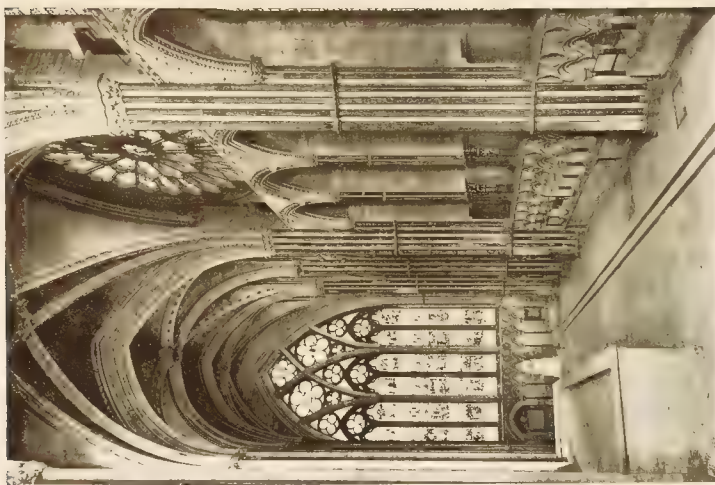
## THE CHOIR, LOOKING WEST

AFTER Dunbar, Cromwell imprisoned three thousand Scots in the cathedral, and the damage they did was immense. Bishop Cosen (1660—1672) replaced the stalls they destroyed and built a new choir screen. The latter was removed in 1846, and the present one erected by Scott a few years later.

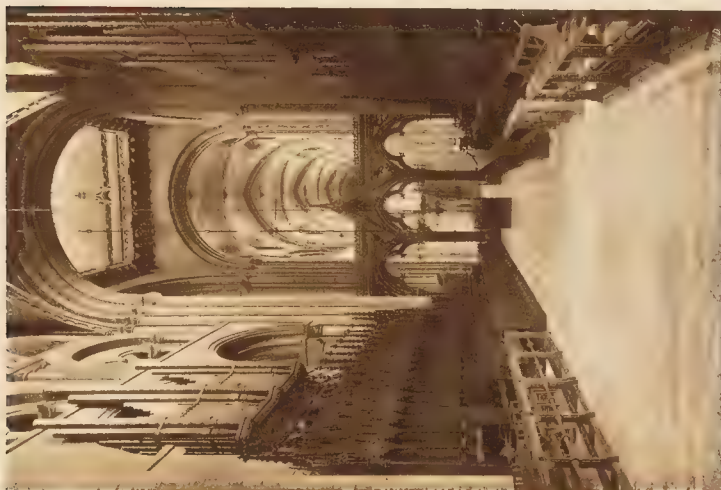
The tomb of Thomas de Hatfield is one of the few old monuments in the cathedral. It was thought sacrilege to bury anybody in the same building as the holy St. Cuthbert, and when at last the rule was broken in 1307, and Anthony Bek was honoured above his predecessors, no splendid tomb was erected over him.



DURHAM CATHEDRAL



THE CHAPEL OF THE NINE ALTARS



THE CHOIR, LOOKING WEST

## THE CHOIR, LOOKING EAST

WILLIAM OF ST. CARILEPH designed the east end of his church with three apses, but when the eastern transept was built all traces of them above ground disappeared. The eastern bay which joins this new work to the Norman choir is very beautiful and rich in elaborate carving.

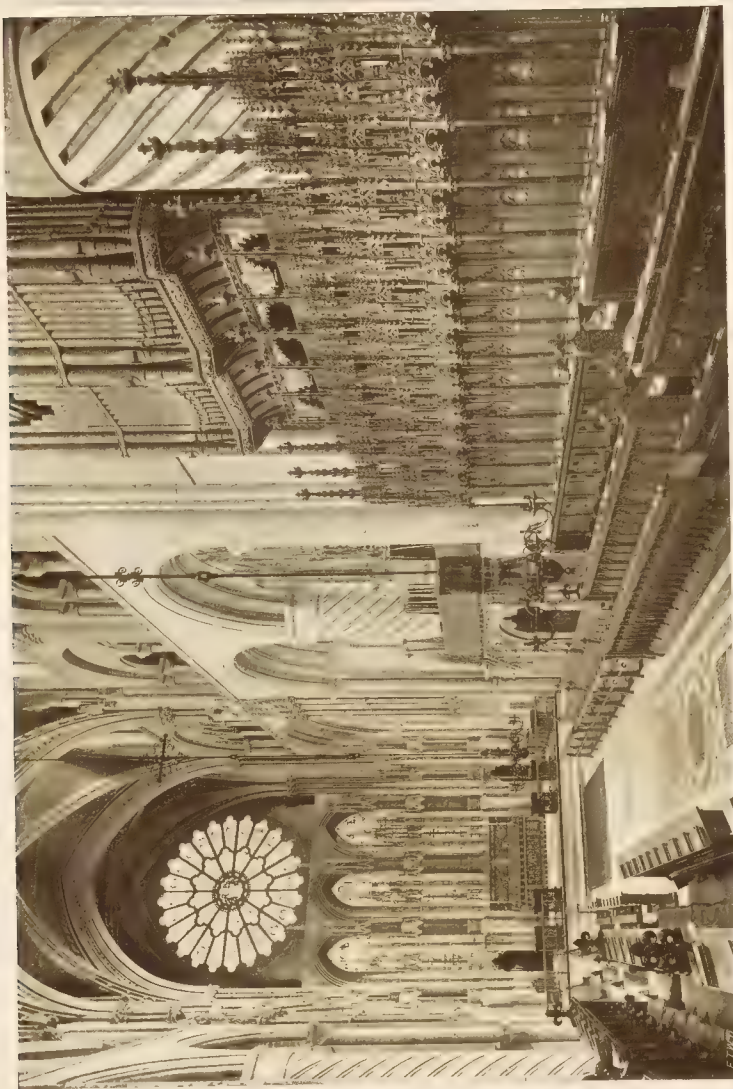
Lord Neville of Raby erected the altar screen in 1380, and it was originally beautified with over a hundred coloured figures.

The great wheel window, over ninety feet in circumference, was restored by Wyatt in 1735.

The vault of the choir is a work of the late thirteenth century, replacing the Norman one.



DURHAM CATHEDRAL



THE CHOIR, LOOKING EAST

## THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE WEIR

THE exterior of Durham is far more beautiful from a distance than near at hand. The reason is that in the eighteenth century restorations the whole church was scraped to a depth of three or four inches. Much beautiful detail and richness of moulding and sculpture thus perished. At a distance this is not appreciated, and the bold outline stands out still unspoilt.

The great central tower is 218 feet high, the second highest in England; the western ones 144 feet. All three were almost certainly intended to carry spires, a design which would have made Durham if possible even more famous for its dignity and soaring grandeur.



DURHAM CATHEDRAL



THE CATHEDRAL, FROM THE WEIR

## THE GALILEE CHAPEL

ST. CUTHBERT'S traditional aversion to women in his church led Bishop Pudsey to build a Lady Chapel where they could worship. At first he tried the east end but great cracks warned him of the saint's displeasure, and he moved his material to the other end of the church. There he built the charming Galilee Chapel, a splendid example of transitional Norman work (1153—1195).

The Venerable Bede, the father of English History, a contemporary of St. Cuthbert, lies buried here, his body having been stolen from Jarrow. In the library are preserved some of his manuscripts and several relics found when his tomb was opened in 1831.

## THE CRYPT

THE Benedictine monastery attached to the cathedral in large measure escaped the general destruction of the sixteenth century. The remains are extensive and very beautiful. This crypt under the library, built in 1404, was the common-room of the monks and in it burned the only fire allowed to the ordinary brothers.

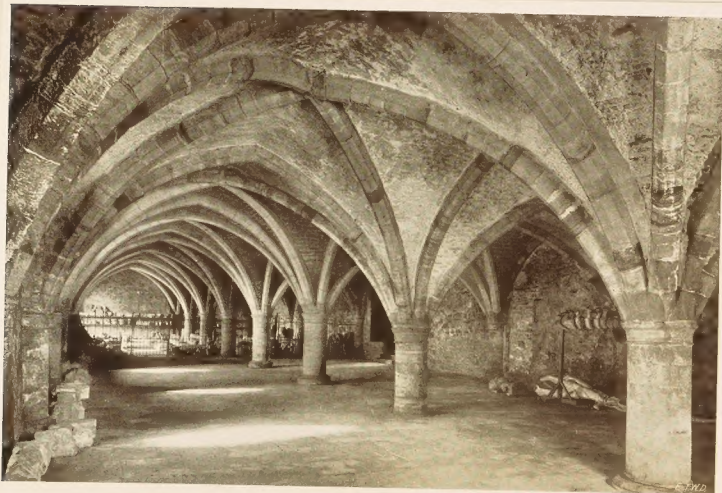
The library above was originally the dormitory and has a remarkably fine timber roof. Many relics of great interest are here preserved, together with a valuable library of early printed books and manuscripts. On the other side of the cloisters is the noble chapter house, which was wantonly destroyed in 1796, but has been entirely rebuilt in memory of Bishop Lightfoot.



DURHAM CATHEDRAL



THE GALILEE CHAPEL



THE CRYPT







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